

sexual selection, nvtke life lovely and wonderful,
 fill it with
niw forrps, and ;uive it progress, and variety and
 change. And
 vrhen we reach the true culture that is our aim,,
 we attain to
 that perfection of which the saints have dreamed,
 the perfection
 of those to whom sin is impossible, not because
 they make the
 renunciations of the ascetic, but because they
 can do every-
 thing they wish without hurt to the soul, and can
 wish for
 nothing that can do the soul harm, the soul being
 an entity so
 divine that it is able to transform into elements of
 a richer
 experience, or a finer susceptibility, or a newer
 mode of thought,
 acts or passions that with the common would be
 commonplace^
 or with the uneducated ignoble, or with the
 shameful vile. Is
 this dangerous? Yes; it is dangerous—all ideas, as
 I told you,
 are so. But the night wearies, and the light flickers
 in the lamp!
 One more thing I cannot help saying to you. You
 have spoken
 against Criticism as being a sterile thing. The
 nineteenth
 century is a turning-point in history, simply on
 account of the
 work of two men, Darwin and Renan, the one the
 critic of the
 Book of Nature, the other the critic of the books
 of God. Not
 to recognize this is to miss the meaning of one of
 the most
 important eras in the progress of the world.
 Creation is always
 behind the age. It is Criticism that leads us.
 The Critical
 Spirit and the World-Spirit are one.

Ernest. And he who is in possession of this
 spirit, or whom
 this spirit possesses, will, I suppose, do nothing?

Gilbert. Like the Persephone of whom Lander
 tells us, the
 sweet pensive Persephone around whose white feet
 the asphodel
 and amaranth are blooming, he will sit
 contented "in that
 deep, motionless quiet which mortals pity, and
 which the ods
 enjoy." He will look out upon the world and know
 its secret.
 By contact with divine things he will become
 divine. His wfl
 be the perfect life, and his only.

Ernest. You have told me many strange things
 to-night,
Gilbert. You have told me that it is more
 difficult to talk
 about a thing than to do it, and that to do
 nothing at all is
 the most difficult thing in the world; you have
 told me that
 all Art is immoral, and all thought dangerous;
 that criticism is
 more creative than creation, and that the
 highest criticism is
 that which rex'eals in the work of Art what the
 artist had not
 put there; that it is exactly because a man
 cannot do a thing
 that he is the proper judge of it; and that the
 true critic is
 unfair, insincere, and not rational. My friend,
 you are a
 dreamer.